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STATINTL

... A Binding Contract

Stealing and/or publishing government secrets for fun and profit has become something of a fad in recent times. But a federal judge in Virginia apparently believes there ought to be some limitations on the practice.

U.S. Dist. Judge Albert V. Bryan Jr. ruled tentatively last week that Victor L. Marchetti, former agent for the Central Intelligence Agency, signed away his constitutional right to write and talk about CIA activities and policies. In his tentative ruling the judge held that Marchetti's dispute with the government agency is a question of an agreement between employer and employee and raised no questions under the First Amendment's free speech guarantee.

In other words, Marchetti would have presumably been perfectly free to talk

and write about the CIA until he accepted a job under the agreement that he would keep the agency's private matters private.

That's fair enough, we believe. There should be some protection of important government secrets, the revelation of which would threaten security.

It should be added that one reason the "Top Secret" classification is taken so lightly and violated so frequently with impunity is that it is so often used on frivolous and unimportant matters that have nothing to do with military security.

In Marchetti's case, if he is indeed privy to important security information about CIA, there should be some lawful way to hold him to his agreement to keep silent.—*Tulsa World*